

CASTLEMAINE

NATURALIST



Grevillea alpina

'Gold fields Grevillea'

MAY 1987 Vol 12.4 #123

THE BOTANIC GARDENS

The Gardens were gazetted in 1856 and it is thought that they were laid out by Mr P. Doran, the first curator, and previously an apprentice to Joseph Paxton of "Chatsworth" in Derbyshire. Ferdinand Mueller provided many hundreds of plants for the garden. The Gardens are entered through an impressive set of cast iron gates set on fine bluestone piers. A manicured garden of lawn, rose beds and annuals near the entrance is contrasted with a large natural area. The gardens are dominated by a naturally designed lake in the centre. They contain many fine trees.

The Castlemaine Botanic Gardens form part of a collection of outstanding country botanic gardens in Victoria and are themselves one of the earliest in the State. They reflect the development of such features that came with the wealth provided to some towns by "gold money". The gardens are a major feature in this important historic town.

The Gardens have seen many changes in the past 124 years. Their history is not well documented and it is therefore not possible to know the period when they were given their current form.

[reprinted from National Trust bulletin]

HAMILTON'S CROSSING EXCURSION

The excursion was made in warm autumn sunshine.

The first stop was to the banks of the Loddon, in private property, a few kilometres upstream from Hamilton's Crossing. It was a beautiful spot, with many mature red gums. One giant has a circumference equal to the outstretched arms of five people, making it about 10 metres around, and a diameter of about 2.5 metres. If the diameter grows at 2 centimetres a year, the age would be a little over 1000 years!

Bull oaks were also quite common along the top of the cliff edge. They were possibly much more common before settlement, and only remnants now remain. Bottle shaped Fairy Martin nests were evident along the cliff. We counted almost 50 of them but no evidence of occupation was seen.

At Hamilton's Crossing the Verbena plants were in flower, and the centre of attraction of several species of butterfly.

The bird list was

Coot	Willy Wagtail	Little Pied Cormorant
Magpie	Noisy Miner	White-plumed H'eaeter
Raven	Swallow	Brown Treecreeper
Galah	Fairy Martin	Red Wattlebird
Kookaburra	Crested Shrike-tit	Superb Blue Wren
Pee-wee	Grass Parrot	

Some of the group returned home through Baringhup and Joyces Creek. Three Black -shouldered Kites were seen hovering, about a kilometre from the Crossing. Near Baringhup a small flock of Crested Pigeons were seen. They were along a fence at the edge of the road, and allowed a good view.

One of the roads from Hamilton's Crossing to Baringhup was lined with St Barnaby's Thistle. The thistle seems to be uncommon in the Castlemaine district - at least it is not on the plant list. Like most thistles, it is an attractive plant. Although the flower head has quite sharp prickles, the rest of the plant is quite soft and spineless.

Quite large flocks of Galahs were roosting on dead trees in Cairn Curran. They are particularly attractive birds when lit by the setting sun. Birds seen on Cairn Curran were

Lapwing	Galah	White-fronted Chat
Silver Gull	Pee Wee	Black-fronted Plover
Magpie	Straw-neck Ibis	Little Pied Cormorant
White Ibis	Mountain Duck	White-faced Heron.
Yellow-bill Spoonbill.		

CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.
BOX 324 CASTLEMAINE.

COMMITTEE Ern Perkins(Pres), Barbara Maund(Sec), Geoff Sitch(Treas), Maggie Oliver(Vice Pres), Kaye Turner(Exc. sec), George Broadway(Libr), Rita Mills(Newsletter), Gunter Liebl, Margaret Dunne, Elma Kelly, Jack Dare(I/P Pres), Berri Perry, Robyn Holden, George Evans.

Subscriptions for 1987 are

Pensioner/student	\$3	Single	\$5
Family	\$8	Supporting	\$12
Newsletter Posted		Membership subscription plus \$5	

Supper roster

May : E. Kelly, G. Sitch
June : B. Eames, L. Perkins

SHOULD THESE TREES BE REPLACED?

Some of the Silver Poplars in some of Castlemaine's streets have become overlarge. For example, the trees near the bridge in Gaulton Street, and in Wheeler Street between the Western Oval and the tennis courts. Should they be replaced by more suitable species? What do you think?

CASTLEMAINE STREET TREES

The Castlemaine F.N.C. is planning to produce a list of the street trees found in Castlemaine streets. To do this the Club will need help from Club members. We need to make a list of the trees, and where they are found. If you can name any of the trees, then please give the name and the locality to our Secretary.

For example -

27 Doveton St - Kurrajong tree
Beckinsales Wine store - Manna Ash

At this stage, any records in any order will be valuable.

C.F.N.C GAINS \$550 GRANT

The Club made an application for financial assistance in publishing the plant list, bird list and the Tour of Castlemaine booklet, and has received a cheque for \$550 from Mr David Kennedy. The conditions and notification letter are included in this newsletter.

Minister for Conservation, Forests & Lands

240 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne
Victoria 3002
Telephone (03) 651 4011

86-281

10 MAR 1987



Mrs Barbara Maund
Secretary
Castlemaine Field Naturalist's Club
PO Box 324
CASTLEMAINE VIC 3450

Dear Mrs Maund

I am writing to formally advise you that my colleague the Honourable Jim Kennan, MLC, Minister for Planning and Environment, and I, have considered your group's application for a grant to assist with a special project. We have agreed to provide a grant of \$550 for the publication of pamphlets on local flora and fauna, geology and history.

The grant is to assist with the project described in your application, and is subject to the conditions set out in Attachment A to this letter. I would be pleased if you would advise me as soon as possible of your acceptance, or otherwise, of these conditions.

The grant to your group is one of many that the Government has been able to make under a program designed to help the valuable work done by a range of conservation and environment groups throughout Victoria. Details of the grants are given in the enclosed copy of a recent press release (Attachment B).

I look forward to your early advice on the acceptance of the grant and associated conditions. In anticipation, I wish the group every success with the project.

Your sincerely,

JOAN E KIRNER
MINISTER FOR CONSERVATION, FORESTS AND LANDS.

CONDITIONS OF GRANT

1. The grant is for the purposes outlined in the letter of notification from the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, and is subject to the general conditions stated in that letter and the particular conditions set out below.
2. The group may spend the funds in the twelve months from the date of issue of the grant cheque.
3. The group will provide to the Minister, by 18 December 1987, a report of progress of the project including a statement of expenditure to that date.
4. If the project is incomplete and the grant has not been totally spent by 18 December 1987, the group will also provide by that date a plan of work and expenditure for the remainder of the project and grant. Further reporting will be as agreed by the group and the Minister.
5. At the completion of the project, the group will provide an income and expenditure statement, together with a certificate from an authorised representative of the group that the grant has been expended in accordance with the approved purpose, and that the income and expenditure statement is a true and fair record.
6. Any unexpended funds or unapplied grant must be returned to the Minister for reallocation not later than the end of the grant period.
7. At the completion of the project, the group will provide to the Minister four copies of any reports, publications or other materials produced as part of the project.
8. The selling price of any publications or other saleable products of the project shall be kept as low as possible and shall be set to cover costs of production and not to secure profits.

OBSERVATIONS FOR APRIL

KOALA was observed in March in Grey Box/yellow gum.

PARSONS BANDS were seen in flower at the Rise and Shine area in Clydesdale. These autumn flowering orchids are named because of a resemblance to a parson's neck-wear.

AURUM MIDGE ORCHIDS were quite common on March 29th at Clydesdale. They are hard to see, with dark wiry stem no more than 10 cm long, and small dark flowers. There was previously only a single record of this orchid, for Kalimna many years ago. The same orchid, *Prasophyllum rufum*, was also found in the same week in Kalimna. The identity of both specimens was confirmed by the National Herbarium.

ACACIA DIFFORMIS is one of Victoria's rarest wattles, and previously was known in this district from a small stand in the Sandon Forest. It is similar in appearance to the Golden Wattles, but has narrower duller leaves. Its main identifying feature is a faint second vein, more or less parallel to the main vein. The Wattle has now been found in two new localities in the district. One of these is on the Clydesdale - Sandon road, and was noticed by E. Perkins. The second was near the Muckleford Forest, on the road to the forest that leaves the main road about kilometre after the Muckleford Creek bridge, was discovered by Ian Higgins. There have been reports of *A. hakeoides* in this area - these need review, as perhaps all are *A. difformis*.

RUFOUS FANTAIL has been observed along the Fryerstown - Taradale road by Peter Starr.

NANKEEN NIGHT HERON. A juvenile has been reported for the lake in the Botanic Gardens. This could perhaps be the same individual as seen in the Muckleford area about a month ago.

ADDITIONS TO THE CASTLEMAINE PLANT LIST. All for area 0, either at Harcourt North or near Hamilton's Crossing.

Rough Tree Fern	*Patterson's Curse	*Black Nightshade
Rock Fern	*Sweet Briar	*Canary Grass
Necklace Fern	Bull Rush	Paddy Melon
Narrow-leaf Hopbush	Bull Rush	*Sow Thistle
*Scarlet Pimpernel	*Golden Thistle	*Rough Sow Thistle
Bidgee-widgee	*Couch Grass	*Bathurst Burr
*Twiggy Mullein	Bull Oak	Wirilda
Clammy Goosefoot	*Mediterranean Barley Grass	

New records for area g (Rise and Shine) are

Parson's Bands Coral Pea Red-anther Wallaby Grass

BIRD LIST ADDITION

Nakewa Night Heron w
Crested Pigeon c
Black-fronted plover c

Rufous Fantail f
Yellow-billed Spoonbill c

SPARROWHAWK IN CASTLEMAINE?

A smallish hawk has been noticed several times flying low in the Doveton Street area. Its habit suggests it may be a Sparrowhawk. Some of the distinguishing features of the Sparrowhawk are broad blunt wings, a notched tail, and greyish markings. Further observations are needed.

LABOUR DAY BIRD LIST

This is a bird list compiled by Phillip West on Labour Day, March 9th, 1987

CASTLEMAINE GOLF LINKS (Newstead Road) 7.00 am. to 8.45 pm.

Magpie	Fuscous Honeyeater	White-browed Babbler
Magpie Lark	Eastern Rosella	Superb Fairy Wren
Black Duck	Varied Sitella	Rainbow Bee-eater
Noisy Miner	Willie Wagtail	Brown Treecreeper
Galah	White-faced Heron	White-plumed Honeyeater
Little Grebe	Diamond Firetail	Australian Raven
Great Egret	Masked Lapwing	Welcome Swallow
Musk Lorikeet	Red-rump Parrot	Grey-crowned Babbler
Restless Flycatcher		

KALIMNA (11.30 am -12.30 pm

Magpie	Eastern Spinebill	Striated Thornbill
Scarlet Robin	Brown Thornbill	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Silveryeye	Red Wattlebird	Speckled Warbler
Little Raven	Spotted Pardalote	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Grey Fantail	Australian Raven	Grey Currawong
Superb Wren	Striated Pardalote	White-eared Honeyeater

THE KAWEKA SANCTUARY

Did you know that the Kaweka Wildflower Reserve is managed by a Committee of Management? The president of the committee is Frank Blake, and Rita Mills is secretary. Meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month at 5.00 p.m. If you would like to know more about the committee, please ask Frank or Rita.

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. AGENDA

Excursions leave promptly at the times shown. Date, time and locality of excursions may be changed at the monthly meetings; if not at the meeting check with a committee member.

Monthly meetings at High School at 8.00 p.m.

Fri 15 May. PERTH TO CENTRAL AUSTRALIA with Pat Bingham.
Note that this is the 3rd Friday in May. . .

Sat 16 May. THE CLAY PITS. Excursion to Donkey Gully and the clay pits. Leader is G. Broadway. Meet S.E.C., Mostyn St at 1.30 p.m.

Sat 6 Jun-Mon 8 Jun. GEELONG F.N.C. CAMPOUT AT CASTLEMAINE.
All excursions leave from Rose Garden car park, Downes Road.

Sat 9 am. Gower School and Muckleford

Sat. 11 am. Local Geology

Sat. 1.30 pm. Local Eucalypts tour to Mt Alexander

Sat 7 pm. Slides of Castlemaine District - at Anglican Church hall (Cr Forest St and Kennedy St)

Sun 9.30 am. Mineral Springs tour, all day

Sun 7 pm. Wildflowers of the goldfields. Anglican Church hall (Cr Forest and Kennedy St)

Mon 9 am. Clay Pits, Monk, Spring Gully. Take lunch.

Mon 2 pm. Geelong FNC depart for Geelong

Fri 12 June. KASHMIR - FLOWERS, LAKES and MOUNTAINS with Gretna Weste.

Sat 13 June. SHICER GULLY. Leave S.E.C, Mostyn St at 1.30 p.m.

Frid 10 July. EUROPE AND AMERICA with Mr G. Barry.

Fri 14 Aug. Simpson Desert with David Plant

Frid 9 Oct. CHINA with John Zwar.

Fri 16 Oct-Sun 18 Oct RUSHWORTH CAMPOUT. Springtime get together of Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association at Rushworth. Accomodation at Waranga Holiday Camp (camp building with bunks) or overnight vans. For bunk or meals book with Marie Allender, 19 Hawthorn Ave, Caulfield North 3161 (03 527 2749). For camp sites and vans book direct with Mr and Mrs Houghton, Waranga Holiday Camp, Tatura Road, Rushworth (058 66 1243). The campout will start with slides and social evening on Friday, and a Saturday excursion, with half day excursion on Sunday.

Sun 18 Oct. MUCKLEFORD FOREST with Bendigo F.N.C. Meet Market Car Park at 10.00 am. Bring your lunch.

